

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 236146

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF
SUBJECT: PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 172577 SEPT. 1973; (B) KABUL 8106

FOR AMBASSADORS ELIOT AND BYROADE

1. SINCE EACH OF YOU PROBABLY WILL HAVE OPPORUNITY IN NEAR FUTURE TO DISCUSS CURRENT STATE PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS, WE CONSIDER THIS OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO REVIEW BRIEFLY USG ATTITUDE TOWARD PROBLEM. DESPITE RESTRAINED EXPRESSION ON CONFIDENTIAL

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PUSHTUNISTAN BY NAIM TO AMBASSADOR ELIOT (REFTEL B), WE CONTINUE TO BE TROUBLED OVER SITUATION BECAUSE OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TWO COUNTRIES, INCLUDING:

(A) REPORTS OF MILITARY "ALERTS" IN BOTH COUNTRIES.;
(B) HARDLINE RHETORIC OF BHUTTO DURING RECENT TOUR OF NWFP AND ADVERSE AFGHAN REACTION;

(C) RECENT ARMS SHIPMENTS OF APPARENTLY SIGNIFICANT NATURE FROM USSR INTO AFGHANISTAN. THIS MESSAGE ALSO REFLECTS CONCERNS RECENTLY EXPRESSED INFORMALLY BY EMBASSY KABUL (NOTAL) THAT SOME PAK SOURCES TALKING OF POSSIBLE GOP PRE-EMPTIVE MEASURES AGAINST AFGHANISTAN, SHOULD GOA FURNISH SUFFICIENT "PROVOCATION".

2. USG OBJECTIVES AND BASIC POSITION TOWARD PAK-AFGHAN

CONFLICT REMAIN AS OUTLINED REFTEL PARAS FOUR THROUGH EIGHT. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT NEITHER SIDE IS ADEQUATELY COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER, WHETHER DELIBERATELY SO OR BY DEFAULT, AND THAT PLAYING OF HARD LINE BY BOTH SIDES COULD TRIGGER STEPS THAT WOULD UPSET FRAGILE STABILITY IN AREA, WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE POWERS. ALTHOUGH NEITHER COUNTRY SO FAR HAS BEEN WILLING TO INITIATE STEPS TO DEFUSE TENSIONS, WE BELIEVE IT WORTHWHILE TO CONTINUE EMPHASIZE THEME THAT AT MINIMUM BOTH SIDES SHOULD CONSIDER IMPROVING THEIR CONTACTS, RATHER THAN SETTING FORCES OF CONFRONTATION IN MOTION.

3. FOR AMBASSADOR ELIOT: WE ARE MILDLY ENCOURAGED BY NAIM'S FORMULATION EXPRESSING HOPE THAT PAKISTAN WOULD HANDLE PUSHTUN PROBLEM IN WAY THAT WOULD "PREVENT THE SITUATION FROM BECOMING ONE IN WHICH AFGHANISTAN WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE ITSELF." THAT AT LEAST IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE EXPRESSION OF GOA POLICY ON THE ISSUE. WE RECOGNIZE, OF COURSE, THAT NAIM TENDS TO PUSH SOFTER LINE THAN DAOUD. LATTER HOWEVER IS ALSO ON RECORD AS SEEKING PEACEFUL RESOLUTION PUSHTUNISTAN "PROBLEM". IF THAT IS TO BE ACHIEVED BY PARTIES CONCERNED WE WANT DAOUD TO APPRECIATE OUR VIEW THAT BOTH SIDES CAN CONTRIBUTE BY COOLING OF RHETORIC AND OTHER STEPS THAT WOULD EASE TENSIONS TO POINT WHERE DIALOGUE WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE. WE HOPE YOU WILL CONFIDENTIAL

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FIND WAYS IN NEAR FUTURE TO REITERATE OUR BELIEF THAT BOTH SIDES COULD TAKE STEPS DESIGNED EASE TENSIONS.

4. DEPARTMENT WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE KABUL'S EVALUATION OF CURRENT SOVIET MILITARY HARDWARE SHIPMENTS INTO AFGHANISTAN. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR JUDGEMENT AS TO WHETHER THIS IS RESUPPLY AND REPLACEMENT EFFORT OR WHETHER NEW SHIPMENTS GIVE AFGHAN MILITARY ANY NEW OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY.

5. FOR AMBASSADOR BYROADE: WE LEAVE TO YOUR DISCRETION HOW STRONGLY YOU WISH TO EMPHASIZE OUR CONCERNS DURING YOUR INITIAL MEETING WITH BHUTTO. HOWEVER, YOUR LONG AND INTIMATE INVOLVEMENT IN PAKISTAN-AFGHAN RELATIONS IN PAST PROVIDES BASIS FOR A PERSPECTIVE AND A FRANKNESS ON THIS SUBJECT WITH

BHUTTO THAT WE BELIEVE IS IN ORDER FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING.
AS FOR THE ISSUE ITSELF, OUR SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN'S
INTEGRITY IS CLEAR AND ON THE RECORD. WE APPRECIATE GOP
VIEW THAT AFGHAN PUSHTUNISTAN POLICY AMOUNTS TO REFUSAL
TO RECOGNIZE PAKISTAN SOVEREIGNTY AND THAT THIS IS TOTALLY
UNACCEPTABLE. AT SAME TIME WE WANT BHUTTO TO
UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERN THAT EXTENT TO WHICH DAOUD PERSISTS

IN PRESENT HARD LINE WILL BE AT LEAST PARTIALLY DETERMINED
BY GOP POSTURE, INCLUDING MANNER AND EXTENT OF PAKISTAN
MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS IN FRONTIER AREA. WE, OF COURSE,
DO NOT BELIEVE DAOUD POSES A SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY THREAT,
DESPITE CURRENT REPORTS OF NEW SOVIET MILITARY SHIPMENTS
TO AFGHANISTAN. FRANKLY, WE STILL HAVE NO EVIDENCE
TO SUPPORT CONCLUSION THAT SOVIETS ARE BEHIND DAOUD'S
CURRENT PUSHTINISTAN LINE, AND WE ALSO TAKE SOME
SATISFACTION IN INDICATIONS THAT INDIANS HAVE
COUNSELED RESTRAINT ON DAOUD. FINALLY, WE HOPE YOU WILL
FIND WAYS TO INDICATE TO BHUTTO OUR VIEW THAT EXTENT TO
WHICH HE CAN PRESS AHEAD WITH GENUINE POLITICAL ACCOMMODA-
TION WITH OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN FRONTIER WILL BE MORE
DECISIVE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN REMOVING ANY BASIS FOR
AFGHAN "MEDDLING". NO ONE KNOWS THAT BETTER THAN
BHUTTO HIMSELF, BUT THAT NEED NOT PRECLUDE OUR INDICATING
THAT WE FEEL THAT WAY TOO.
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6. FYI: AMBASSADOR SULTAN KHAN IS PAYING FAREWELL CALL
ON SECRETARY DECEMBER 3. IF THERE SHOULD BE ANY
SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSION PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS AFFECTING
ABOVE GUIDANCE, WE WILL INFORM YOU ASAP. END FYI. PORTER

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